**THE USE OF VISUAL NOVEL VIDEO GAMES AND STUDENTS’ VOCABULARY LEARNING**

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# ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to know whether video game is effective to improve or expand vocabulary mastery. This research uses descriptive design. The participant consists of two third grade college students in Bandung. The data were collected by pretest, posttest and an interview. The result of this research indicates that video game is effective enough in the mastery of vocabulary. From the interview result it shows that participants feel happy and feels helped by using this method because for them this method is really fun, interesting and easy to learn. This method really fits for people who don’t really like reading book. The overall results indicate that after using Rewrite visual novel video game the mastery of the participant’s vocabulary increased. The result is retrieved from comparing the result of pretest and that of the posttest.

**Keyword:** *Vocabulary, videogames, rewrite, visual novel, vocabulary mastery, expand.*

**INTRODUCTION**

In educational world, language is the basic knowledge for human. Since baby, we need to learn language, and also if we want to understand each other we need language and learning a language is not easy, similar to vocabulary, we don't absorb and memorize information as easily. Vocabulary is the main building block of language learning. The words arrange together on a grammar base and form the whole building of message. One cannot learn language without vocabulary (Kang, 1995). Vocabulary is central to English language teaching because without sufficient vocabulary, students cannot understand others or express their own ideas (Wilkins, 1972). Learning vocabulary is not easy because we need to learn, absorb and also memorize every single word to link that form into a meaning. The growing importance of vocabulary has been evident not only in second/foreign language teaching and learning in a wider context of the world, but also in the Indonesian context of EFL (Cahyono and Widiati, 2008).

On the other hand, vocabulary has been acknowledged as L2 learners' greatest single source of problems (Meara, 1980 as cited in Alqahtani, 2015). Many problems we face if we want to learn vocabularies such as feeling bored with the lesson or the teacher, lack of confidence, feelings that English is the most difficult lesson, not having a partner, also feeling scared and confuse. Cameron (2001) states that vocabulary, as one of the knowledge areas in language, plays a great role for learners in acquiring a language. Vocabulary is so important for our daily life and for language learning, also a path to learning second language.

Several researchers mention that are several ways to learn vocabulary, one of them is playing video games such as Jasso who used The Sims for teaching hair and dress related vocabulary.

Video games are electronic, interactive games known for their vibrant colors, sound effects, and complex graphics (Encyclopedia of Children's Health, 2017). Nowadays, video game is not only just an entertainment but it can be an educational exercise or releasing stress from daily routine job. Rankin, Gold, and Gooch (2006) found that video games are beneficial for both communicational skills and vocabulary acquisition. Our brain will unconsciously absorb vocabulary in the game, so we indirectly learning English. Jasso (2012) used a commercial video game for teaching vocabulary and Found the game influential as well, Jasso used a commercial simulation game called The Sims for teaching hair and dress related vocabulary. In her thesis, she compared the performance of learners who experienced learning the selected words via the video game, and those who learned the same words in traditional method. The results of her study revealed that the video game group outperformed the traditional group in acquiring vocabulary. Video games are engaging (Jaipal & Figg, 2009). What makes video games engaging is the ability to create a story for the player to follow either direct story writing or perceived. Video games-enhanced motivation is productive in language learning and, especially, vocabulary learning. Turgut and Irgin (2009, p. 763) mention how motivation can enhance language learning while playing video games: “for participants, understanding the information presented in both written and oral dialogues had importance motivating them to learn unknown words and focusing on characters’ speech in the game to win the game”. Cruz (2007) states that video games can be used to language learning. There are so many genres for video game such as action, fighting, FPS (first person shooting), puzzle, sports, visual novel, horror, adventure, and RPG (role playing game).

Several video games increase our vocabulary such as Final fantasy X, the Sims, etc. *Visual Novel* or we can say VN is a genre based from video games that if we play, we can have a role character from the video game itself, usually if we play VN game, we always be the main character who build the story until ends, let’s say, you are the main protagonist/hero from the VN game you played, VN often revolves almost entirely around character interactions and [dialogue choices](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialog_tree), usually featuring complex branching dialogues and often presenting the player's possible responses word-for-word as the [player character](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Player_character) would say them revolving around relationship-building as well as dating [simulations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simulation), you can customize and power up your hero’ status, relationship, and what kind of ending you want to choose it’s depends on the player, also throughout gameplay, you will encounter interesting mini games.

There is little research on the effectiveness of various methods within the context of intentional vocabulary learning (Ansarin and Khojatseh, 2013). Research about measuring vocabulary or developing vocabulary learning with VN is still rare, sometimes it depends on the learner itself, vocabulary learners still do with conventional method, with conventional method sometimes it will get bored easily. Writer's wants to make an alternative way to learn vocabulary.

This paper scrutinizes the phenomena of Rewrite VN in promoting immediate vocabulary retention of the gamers. In addition, this paper also analyzes the complexity of vocabulary from what they get and learn through VN.

**METHOD**

This research is conducted at one of the universities in Bandung. The participants of this study are 2 college students who are also a learner and gamer. The subjects of this study are the college students in Bandung, in 2017/2018 academic year, the participant also like to play all kind of games genre especially Visual Novel. The participants were chosen because of the easy access and also the participants have a curiosity and interest about vocabulary and games.

In collecting the data, the Writer first use pretest to measure the participant vocabulary mastery before they play the game. After that the writer use posttest, the purpose of this test there for to know the participant's vocabulary mastery after playing Rewrite visual novel video game. For collecting the data before pretest and measure the vocabulary participant's, as instrument, writers used the vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS) and common European framework (CEFR). According to Wesche and Paribakht (1996) and Read (2000, P. 132-138), the VKS is a generic instrument, in the sense that it can be used to measure any set of words. It uses five scales to capture certain stages in the initial development of core knowledge of given words. The VKS combines self-report and performance items to elicit the self-perceived and demonstrated knowledge of specific word in written form. It consists of two types of scales: one for tapping learners' perceived knowledge of given words and the other for scoring the responses. As for CEFR gives a detailed description of learner level by skill, in a language-neutral format. It is a useful reference document for school, syllabus designers, teachers’ trainers and proficient learners (Cambridge University Press, 2013). The second instrument in collecting the data is interview. The purpose of the interview therefore to know participants respond/opinion about the method by using visual novel video game in learning vocabulary.

This research is qualitative research because the researcher did direct observations to see how the participants use visual novel video games to learn vocabulary and see the participants’ responses toward the use of visual novel video game. According to James H. Mcmillan (2008) research is a process of gathering, investigating and analyzing the information or data systematically and directly from the specific source of data. In this research, qualitative approaches have been applied. Qualitative design was used to collect analyze the data. The data collected by using posttest and interview.

**FINDING AND DISCUSSION.**

This part discusses the result of data analysis, finding a solution and interpretation which makes up findings and discussion. The data of this research are obtained from the pretest and posttest and interview for the participants.

**Overall Results of Pretest and Posttest**

The purpose of this part is to answer the question includes in the research questions, the research questions of this research are what are the participants opinions toward the use of visual novel video game to learn vocabulary, and how does the vocabulary size of the player expand after they play the game. There are three data collection techniques of the research, the first one is pretest, the second one is posttest, and the last one is interview. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton, 1999). Triangulation also has been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources. Triangulation means using more than one method to collect data on the same topic. This is a way of assuring the validity of research through the use of a variety of methods to collect data on the same topic, which involves different types of samples as well as methods of data collection.

In order to know the detail about the scoring before pretest, the participants processed the words from the game both from the dialogue or from surrounding words that were available in game. The detailed scoring of the words was based on Wesche & Paribakht (1996) in VKS. The scale ratings scoring range from 1 representing completely unfamiliarity, 2 representing the word is familiar but the meaning is not known, 3 representing a correct synonym or translation is given, 4 representing the word is used with semantic appropriateness in a sentence and 5 the highest scale, representing the ability to use a word with grammatical and semantic accuracy in a sentence.

Table 1. The Result of the CEFR test from participant 1

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Pre test(Before) |  |
| No. | Word | Score |
| 1234567891011121314151617181920 | - Selfishness- Struggle- Ignorance- Duty- Regret- Blood- Memory- Decision- Bully- Fool- Doubt- Honor- Victim- Cruelty- Speed- Command- Darkness- Luxury- Rage- Punishment | 11111111111111111111 |
| Total | 20 |

In overall result, the participant 1 did the CEFR test and had an average score 1 representing complete unfamiliarity. representing a correct synonym or translation. So the participant 1 vocabulary level is A1 (basic user). To get better understanded of the level in CEFR below is the detailed information of CEFR.

***Beginer score 1-30***

English level A1 is the first level of English in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a determination of various levels of language proficiency compiled by the European Council. In everyday conversation, this level is called "beginner", and indeed the term is an official level description in CEFR which is also used by EF SET. In practice, someone might be at the pre-A1 level in English. A student who has just started learning English, or has no prior knowledge of English, is at the pre-A1 level.

***Elementary score 31 – 40***

English level A2 is the second level of English in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a determination of various levels of language proficiency compiled by the European Council. In everyday conversation, this level is commonly referred to as "basic", as in the sentence "I can speak basic English". The official level description in CEFR is "elementary", which means more or less the same, namely: foundation. At this level, students have mastered basic English and can communicate simple basic needs.

***Intermediate score 41 - 50***

English level B1 is the third level of English in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a determination of various levels of language proficiency compiled by the European Council. In everyday conversation, this level is called "intermediate", and indeed the term is an official level description in CEFR. At this level, students have gone beyond basic English, but they have not been able to work or study exclusively in English.

***Upper Intermediate score 51 - 60***

English level B2 is the fourth level of English in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a determination of various levels of language proficiency prepared by the European Council. In everyday conversation, this level is commonly referred to as "confident or confident", as in the sentence "I am a confident English speaker". The official level information is "upper intermediate". At this level, students can function independently in a variety of academic and professional environments using English, although with a variety of nuances and limited accuracy.

***Advanced score 61 – 70***

English level C1 is the fifth level of English in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a determination of various levels of language proficiency compiled by the European Council. In everyday conversation, this level is commonly referred to as "advanced", and the term is an official level description in CEFR which is also used by EF SET. At this level, students can function independently and accurately in a variety of ways and in almost every circumstance without prior preparation.

***Proficient score 71 – 100***

English level C2 is the sixth and highest level of English in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a determination of various levels of language proficiency compiled by the European Council. In everyday conversation, this level is commonly referred to as "bilingual / bilingual", as in the sentence "I speak bilingual, English and French." Technically, a native speaker of English with high education is at level C2. Relatively few English students reach this level because their professional or academic goals do not need it.

**Pretest**

In pretest the participant is tested first before using the game, due to measure the initial ability of the participant. There are 40 questions including 10 questions for multiple choice, in multiple choice the participant should choose the right answer on A-D choices, 20 questions for making a sentence using the vocabulary which has been provided on the question paper and 10 question fill the blank so they should guess which best vocabulary that fit on the sentence which has been provided on the question. The result is participant 1 have 65.0 score from pretest and participant 2 have 60.00 score, from pretest if we average both it revealed that the result of pretest is 62.50 score.

Table 2. Pretest

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Participant | Score | Total |
| Participant 1 | 65.00 |
| Multiple choice | 7 |
| Created sentences | 12 |
| Fill the blank | 7 |
| Participant 2 | 60.00 |
| Multiple choice | 8 |
| Created sentences | 10 |
| Fill the blank | 6 |

**Posttest 1**

In scoring result for phase 1, the first participant got 7.00 and the second participant got 6.25. In posttest 1, There are 40 questions including 10 questions for multiple choice, the same as in pretest that the participants should choose the right answer on A-D choices, 20 questions for making a sentence using the vocabulary which has been provided on the question paper, the question level is raised to measure more participant vocabulary skills and 10 questions fill the blank so they should guess which best vocabulary that fit on the sentence which has been provided on the question, the number of this question raised to see participant ability to choose the right vocabulary on blank sentences. All of the vocabulary is from the Visual novel video game.

Table 3. Posttest 1

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Participant | Score | Total |
| Participant 1 | 70.00 |
| Multiple choice | 7 |
| Created sentences | 17 |
| Fill the blank | 4 |
| Participant 2 | 62.50 |
| Multiple choice | 9 |
| Created sentences | 12 |
| Fill the blank | 4 |

**Posttest 2**

In scoring result for phase 2, the first participant got 8.00 and the second participant got 7.25. In posttest 2, There are 40 questions including 10 questions for multiple choice, the same as in pretest that the participants should choose the right answer on A-D choices, 20 questions for making a sentence using the vocabulary which has been provided on the question paper, the question level is raised to measure more participant vocabulary skills and 10 questions fill the blank so they should guess which best vocabulary that fit on the sentence which has been provided on the question, the number of this question raised to see participant ability to choose the right vocabulary on blank sentences. All of the vocabulary is from the Visual novel video game.

Table 4. Posttest 2

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Participant | Score | Total |
| Participant 1 | 80.00 |
| Multiple choice | 8 |
| Created sentences | 20 |
| Fill the blank | 4 |
| Participant 2 | 72.50 |
| Multiple choice | 10 |
| Created sentences | 10 |
| Fill the blank | 9 |

**Posttest 3**

In scoring result for phase 3, the first participant got 8.50 and the second participant got 8.00. In posttest 3, There are 40 questions including 10 questions for multiple choice, the same as in pretest that the participants should choose the right answer on A-D choices, 20 questions for making a sentence using the vocabulary which has been provided on the question paper, the question level is raised to measure more participant vocabulary skills and 10 questions fill the blank so they should guess which best vocabulary that fit on the sentence which has been provided on the question, the number of this question raised to see participant ability to choose the right vocabulary on blank sentences. All of the vocabulary is from the Visual novel video game.

Table 5. Posttest 3

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Participant | Score | Total |
| Participant 1 | 85.00 |
| Multiple choice | 8 |
| Created sentences | 18 |
| Fill the blank | 8 |
| Participant 2 | 80.00 |
| Multiple choice | 10 |
| Created sentences | 13 |
| Fill the blank | 9 |

**From Data Interview**

From the interview, the participants responded to the use of visual novel video game and student vocabulary positively. From the participants’ statements, they were interested in learning vocabulary because of some reasons. They found the strategy through playing video games to expand their vocabulary is very effective and could be used for some people who were not too interested in reading books. Most of them made various responses regarding this strategy for example:

Question:

1. What do you think about this method “using Rewrite Visual novel video game” to learn vocabulary? Is it effective to help you remember a new word?

Participant 1 answer:

Yes definitely, because it’s kinda like kills two bird with one stone! I play video games and yet I Study vocabulary at the same time, That’s awesome! It’s much more better then just reading a book, I learn a lot of new vocabulary from here in a fun way, the story of the game is so fun to read I didn’t get bored learning. So yeah I guess this is a great method for gamer to learn vocabulary and it’s effective for me.

Participant 2 answer:

Yes I think it’s a great thing learning from video games coz there’s so much vocabulary that I didn’t know, so… Yes it’s effective for me, because there are so many words that new for me, and actually it’s really fun doing this, Playing video games and learn a lot of new vocabulary at the same time, well it’s not like I will remember all of the new vocabulary but still Now I know what I didn’t know.

Participant 1 said that he learned a lot from the video games much better then just reading book. Participant 2 said that it’s a great thing learning from video games and it’s effective for both of the participant. Turgut and irgin (2009), in their study concerning learning English via computer games, found that video games are effective toward learning sub-skills, especially vocabulary and pronunciation. Schlimme (2002) also believes that video games provide a context in which participants can discuss scenarios and outcomes in order to facilitate their understanding of other concepts and can improve children’s reading, spelling and spatial abilities and critical-analyzing techniques. Schlimme (2002) also maintains that some simulation video games present players with unfamiliar words which are needed in order to succeed in the game, and, therefore, the players’ vocabulary levels may increase as a result.

1. How important do you think vocabulary learning is? Why?

Participant 1 answer:

I guess It’s Very important, coz by knowing a lot of vocabulary the more you can understand conversation. Oh and also it’s important for communicating skill too, it’s really troublesome when I talk to my friend in online game that I didn’t undertand what they mean.

Participant 2 answer:

It’s very important, because I want to learn those personaly so I can talk with foreigner and it will be really helpful if I know so many vocabulary so I won’t get any trouble like in speaking or writing.

Participant 1 and 2 say that learning vocabulary is really important for understanding foreign language so they can understand them well. According to Alqahtani (2015), in order to understand the language, specifically English language, vocabulary is very important to be acquired by the learner. And also Alqahtani (2015) asserts that learning of vocabulary is an important part in foreign language learning as the meanings of new words are very often highlighted, whether in books or in classrooms.

1. What do you feel when use this method for your vocabulary knowledge “Rewrite Visual novel video game”?

Participant 1 answer:

It’s kinda fun actually, because it really look like a simulation of life so if I fail in the game I can learn that I won’t made the same mistake as I did in the game, it’s a good example and also it’s quite challenging.

Participant 2 answer:

I feel exited and it’s quite fun learning using video game but at the same time I also wonder why people think video game is not good for learning. Anyway I think its good enough for me to learn vocabulary from this.

First, the method was like killing two bird with one stone, they play video games and yet they study vocabulary at the same time. It also helped them to understand the text better. so it helped them to enrich their vocabulary because in every reading we will definitely find new vocabulary especially for those who learn foreign languages where vocabulary is very important.

**CONCLUSION**

This method involves 2 participants who are still third grade on campus. This method is based on the results of playing Rewrite visual novel game. It can be concluded that the ability of participants vocabulary increased by 12.5%. The increase of 12.5% is derived from the average score of posttests minus the average score of pretests = 75.00 – 62.50 = 12.5. The relationship that exists between video game and student vocabulary learning are good for communication skill like Rankin, Gold, and Gooch (2006) found that video game is beneficial for both communicational skills and vocabulary acquisition. Participant 1 show that Rewrite Visual novel video game is an interesting alternative way to expand the vocabulary rather than learn vocabulary from a book, for him it’s like *kills two bird with one stone*, he played video games and yet he’s also study vocabulary at the same time, he’s learned a lot of new vocabulary from the video game in a fun way. As forthe participant 2 show that for him expanding his vocabulary mastery while playing video games is effective because there’s a lot of a new vocabulary in it.

In this conclusion, it is stated that learning vocabulary by using Rewrite visual novel video games is not only fun also we can get a lot of a new words in it this is an attractive way to learn vocabulary.

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